



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

[4910-EX-P]

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

[Docket No. FMCSA- 2013-0121]

Qualification of Drivers; Application for Exemptions; Hearing

AGENCY: Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of applications for exemptions; request for comments.

SUMMARY: FMCSA announces that 9 individuals have applied for a medical exemption from the hearing requirement in the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs). In accordance with the statutory requirements concerning applications for exemptions, FMCSA requests public comments on these requests. The statute and implementing regulations concerning exemptions require that exemptions must provide an equivalent or greater level of safety than if they were not granted. If the Agency determines the exemptions would satisfy the statutory requirements and decides to grant these requests after reviewing the public comments submitted in response to this notice, the exemptions would enable 9 individuals to operate CMVs in interstate commerce.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before [Insert date 30 days after date of publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments bearing the Federal Docket Management System (FDMS) Docket No. FMCSA- 2013-0121] using any of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the on-line instructions for submitting comments.

- Mail: Docket Management Facility; U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E., West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, Washington, DC 20590-0001.
- Hand Delivery: West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E., Washington, DC, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., ET, Monday through Friday, except Federal Holidays.
- Fax: 1-202-493-2251.

Instructions: Each submission must include the Agency name and the docket numbers for this notice. Note that all comments received will be posted without change to <http://www.regulations.gov>, including any personal information provided. Please see the Privacy Act heading below for further information.

Docket: For access to the docket to read background documents or comments, go to <http://www.regulations.gov> at any time or Room W12-140 on the ground level of the West Building, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E., Washington, DC, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., ET, Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The FDMS is available 24 hours each day, 365 days each year. If you want acknowledgment that we received your comments, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope or postcard or print the acknowledgement page that appears after submitting comments on-line.

Privacy Act: Anyone may search the electronic form of all comments received into any of our dockets by the name of the individual submitting the comment (or of the person signing the comment, if submitted on behalf of an association, business, labor union, etc.). You may review DOT's Privacy Act Statement for the FDMS published in the Federal Register on January 17, 2008 (73 FR 3316).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Elaine M. Papp, Chief Medical Programs, (202) 366-4001, fmcsamedical@dot.gov, FMCSA, Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E., Room W64-224, Washington, DC 20590-0001. Office hours are from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration has authority to grant exemptions from many of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs) under 49 U.S.C. 31315 and 31136(e), as amended by Section 4007 of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA- 21) (Pub. L. 105-178, June 9, 1998, 112 Stat. 107, 401). FMCSA has published in 49 C.F.R. part 381, subpart C final rules implementing the statutory changes in its exemption procedures made by section 4007, 69 FR 51589 (August 20, 2004).¹ Under the rules in part 381, subpart C, FMCSA must publish a notice of each exemption request in the Federal Register. The Agency must provide the public with an opportunity to inspect the information relevant to the application, including any safety analyses that have been conducted and any research reports, technical papers and other publications referenced in the application. The Agency must also provide an opportunity to submit public comment on the applications for exemption.

The Agency reviews the safety analyses and the public comments and determines whether granting the exemption would likely achieve a level of safety equivalent to or greater than the level that would be achieved without the exemption. The decision of the

¹ This action adopted as final rules the interim final rules issued by FMCSA's predecessor in 1998 (63 FR 67600 (Dec. 8, 2008)), and adopted by FMCSA in 2001 (66 FR 49867 (Oct. 1, 2001)).

Agency must be published in the Federal Register. If the Agency denies the request, it must state the reason for doing so. If the decision is to grant the exemption, the notice must specify the person or class of persons receiving the exemption and the regulatory provision or provisions from which an exemption is granted. The notice must also specify the effective period of the exemption (up to 2 years) and explain the terms and conditions of the exemption. The exemption may be renewed.

The current provisions of the FMCSRs concerning hearing state that a person is physically qualified to drive a CMV if that person

First perceives a forced whispered voice in the better ear at not less than 5 feet with or without the use of a hearing aid or, if tested by use of an audiometric device, does not have an average hearing loss in the better ear greater than 40 decibels at 500 Hz, 1,000 Hz, and 2,000 Hz with or without a hearing aid when the audiometric device is calibrated to American National Standard (formerly ASA Standard) Z24.5—1951.

49 CFR 391.41(b)(11). This standard was adopted in 1970, with a revision in 1971 to allow drivers to be qualified under this standard while wearing a hearing aid, 35 FR 6458, 6463 (April 22, 1970) and 36 FR 12857 (July 3, 1971).

FMCSA also issues instructions for completing the medical examination report and includes advisory criteria on the report itself to provide guidance for medical examiners in applying the hearing standard. See 49 C.F.R. 391.43(f). The current advisory criteria for the hearing standard include a reference to a report entitled “Hearing Disorders and Commercial Motor Vehicle Drivers” prepared for the Federal Highway Administration, FMCSA’s predecessor, in 1993.²

² This report is available on the FMCSA web site at http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/facts-research/research-technology/publications/medreport_archives.htm.

FMCSA Requests Comments on the Exemption Applications

FMCSA requests comments from all interested parties on whether a driver who cannot meet the hearing standard should be permitted to operate a CMV in interstate commerce. Further, the Agency asks for comments on whether a driver who cannot meet the hearing standard should be limited to operating only certain types of vehicles in interstate commerce, for example, vehicles without air brakes. The statute and implementing regulations concerning exemptions require that the Agency request public comments on all applications for exemptions. The Agency is also required to make a determination that an exemption would likely achieve a level of safety that is equivalent to, or greater than, the level that would be achieved absent such exemption before granting any such requests. 49 U.S.C.

Information on Individual Applicants

Michael Desarmeaux

Mr. Desarmeaux holds a driver's license from Ohio. He would like to drive any type of CMV, if he is granted an exemption.

Daniel I. Grossinger

Mr. Grossinger holds a driver's license from Maryland. His family owns a landscaping business and if granted the exemption, he would like to drive heavy equipment for the business.

David W. Hoffman

Mr. Hoffman holds a class A Commercial driver's license (CDL) from South Dakota. He has been driving a range of different trucks in intrastate commerce for more than 5 years. He would like to continue to drive a range of different trucks if granted an

exemption.

Christopher A. Jayne

Mr. Jayne holds a class A Commercial driver's license (CDL) from Missouri. He has experience driving a tractor trailer until recently when he lost his hearing. He would like to resume driving tractor trailer trucks in interstate commerce, if granted an exemption.

Jayson Lawson

Mr. Lawson holds a driver's license from Arkansas. He would like to drive a CMV in interstate commerce, if he is granted an exemption.

Jeffrey Pagenkopf

Mr. Pagenkopf holds a driver's license from Minnesota. He would like to drive a CMV in interstate commerce, if he is granted an exemption.

Gilbert Partida

Mr. Partida holds a class A Commercial driver's license from Texas. He has over 20 years of driving experience and currently drives a tractor trailer. He would like to resume driving a tractor trailer in interstate commerce, if he is granted an exemption.

Jacob Paullin

Mr. Paullin holds a driver's license from Wisconsin. He would like to drive a semi-truck in interstate commerce, if he is granted an exemption.

Fernando Ramirez-Savon

Mr. Ramirez-Savon holds a class A Commercial driver's license from New Mexico. He has been driving a CMV in interstate commerce until recently when he failed to pass the hearing test. He would like to resume driving in interstate commerce, if

he is granted an exemption.

Request for Comments

In accordance with 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315(b)(4), FMCSA requests public comment from all interested persons on the exemption petitions described in this notice.

The Agency will consider all comments received before the close of business **[Insert date 30 days after date of publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER]**. Comments will be available for examination in the docket at the location listed under the **ADDRESSES** section of this notice. The Agency will file comments received after the comment closing date in the public docket, and will consider them to the extent practicable. In addition to late comments, FMCSA will also continue to file, in the public docket, relevant information that becomes available after the comment closing date. Interested persons should monitor the public docket for new material.

Issued on: April 23, 2013

Larry W. Minor
Associate Administrator for Policy

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